

encourages us to scurry idly to and fro like
water-beetles
on the surface of ourselves, to skate like
society on polished
ice, without plunging down to the secrets
of the lonely
depths.

Better love-affairs than friendship. True,
love is only a
means of mutual torture. It cannot bring
happiness, for
fruition automatically breaks the lover's
enchantment and
the fairy gold turns in his hands to withered
leaves. The
woman he loves is a dream-princess, not the
woman who
murmurs 'Yes.'

For thus men's hearts have ached since man's
beginning;

Beauty may blast, Love cannot wholly bless.
We stretch vain hands, pure hands alike and
sinning.

But Beauty cannot give, nor Love possess;
As in old tales, when wraiths of lovers perished
Glimmered once more on eyes that wept them
dead,
Still from the living arms that vainly cherished.
Like a thin smoke, the subtle phantom flei

A love-affair is, indeed, for Proust a quadrille
of ghosts—
of two insubstantial and ever-changing
selves, together
with their two imaginary conceptions of
each other. And
love can only be saved from dying of its own
success by a
surgical operation that will set the
imagination once more
passionately to work—by the knife of
jealousy slowly
twisted in the heart.

But, he would add, it does not matter
that love does
not bring happiness. So much the better.
'Une femme
dont nous avons besoin nous fait souffrir, tire
de nous des
series de sentiments autrement profonds,
autrement vi-
taux, qu'un homme superieur qui nous
interesse.'
'Quant

au bonheur, il n'a presque qu'une seule
utilite, rendxe le
malheur possible . . . le dechirement si
precieux qui
s'appelle le malheur/

This, to be sure, is a gay view of
existence. He admits
its grinness. 'Quand un etre est si mal
conforme . . .